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ALL THE RUMOURS

BY REGINALD ARKELL
& ALFRED LEETE



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I am sending you an extract from my son's letter (he is on active service somewhere in France). I wrote, asking if I should send him vermin powder, and his reply is : **"Don't send any vermin powder, thanks ; I use Wright's Coal Tar Soap, that's as effective and much more pleasant."** It seems to me a unique and spontaneous tribute to your soap.—Yours truly, S——.

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George Thompson

ALL THE RUMOURS

Rhymed by
REGINALD ARKELL

Pictured by
ALFRED LEETE



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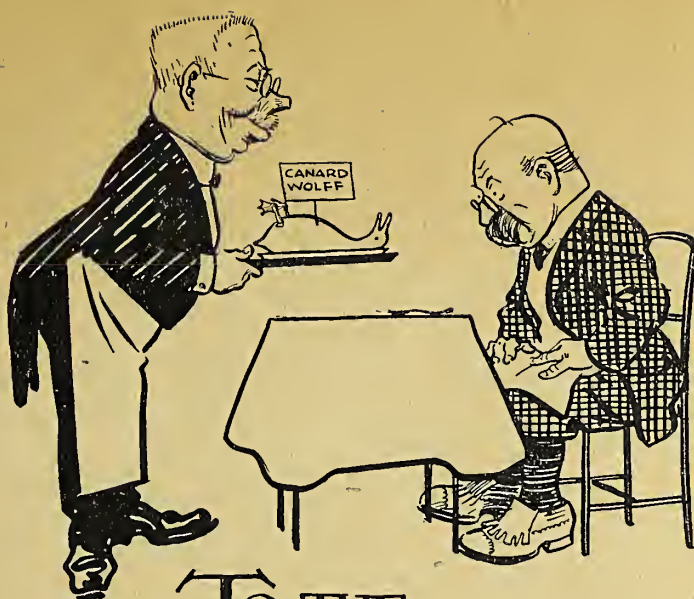
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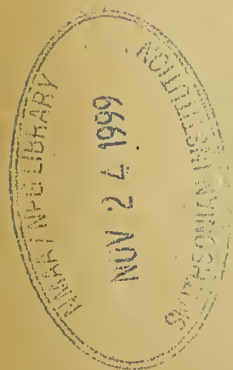
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TO THE READER

TO you who wisely wagged your head
 At what the dustman's brother said :
 To you who saw the German Fleet
 March proudly into Sackville Street :
 To doctors, deacons, deans and dons
 Who cherish feathers found at Mons ;
 Who saw the Russians passing through—
 In fact, to every one of you
 Whose windows overlook the spot
 Where Privy Councillors are shot—
 These pictures and these artless rhymes
 Of rumours heard a score of times—
 Rumours at which we laughed or grieved,
 Rumours which everyone believed—
 We duly dedicate to you
 Because you once believed them true.



"Belgium Declares War on Germany"



THE gentle German sat and smiled,
As harmless as a little child—
A child who puts a lighted match
Beneath his old grandmother's thatch.

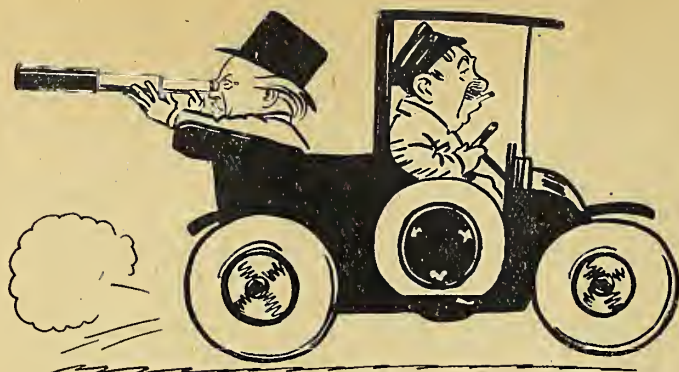
And, as the gentle German smiled,
He fed a small Alsatian child
With bread and honey from a jar—
Which shows how gentle Germans are.

And, as the German turned his eyes
Unto the everlasting skies,
The Belgian hit him on the head—
At least, that's what the German said !



“ Which shows how gentle Germans are..”

"The German Fleet Sunk"



ONE morning in August, Winston strode
Out of his house in the Cromwell Road.
His brow was set and his eye was grim,
His footman shivered to look at him.
He whistled a taxi down the street,
And started to sink the German Fleet.

The Censor has censored, strange to say,
What happened on that eventful day
Between the hours that he packed his trunk
And the German Navy was safely sunk ;
But, in the morning, the news was out,
And Winston did it, without a doubt.



"And Winston did it, without a doubt."

“The Kaiser’s Heart Bleeds for Louvain”



I GAVE instructions—I wrote it down
That not a solitary Belgian town
Was even to hear the sound of a gun,
And look what the clumsy fellows have done!
I like the place—I’ve been through in the train,
And my heart is bleeding for fair Louvain.

I told them I’d rather lose the war
And all the things we are fighting for—
England and Scotland, and Ireland too
(We’re better without *that, entre nous*),
Holland, America, Denmark, Spain,
Than that aught should happen to fair Louvain.

When I’ve won the war, and have time to spare,
I shall build a magnificent palace there.
Something to really improve the view—
Three times larger, and twice as new;
A wonderful spire, with a gilded vane—
Take it from me, you won’t know Louvain.



“My heart is bleeding for fair Louvain.”

"Russians Pass Through England"



A *CHAP* at the office, whose uncle knew
A ticket collector at Waterloo,
Told the tale, so it must be true.

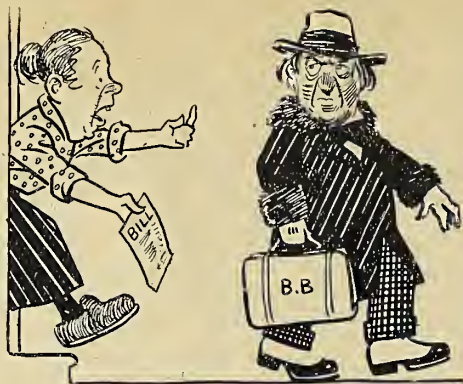
They landed at Leith—where my people are,
And Uncle Gregory drove the Czar
The whole of the way in his private car.

My cousin Amelia waved her hand
To the men of the famed Balalaika Band.
Jim helped with the horses, I understand.

All of the Russians got safely through,
Because the Czar had the sense to do
What Uncle Gregory told him to.



"Concrete Bed Found at Bath"



I QUARRELLED with Sir Herbert Tree, a year or two ago,
And joined *The Bloodstained Bodkin* tour—a charming little show.

It moved the house to merriment, 'twas void of all offence;
One local paper said that I—the Bodkin—was immense.

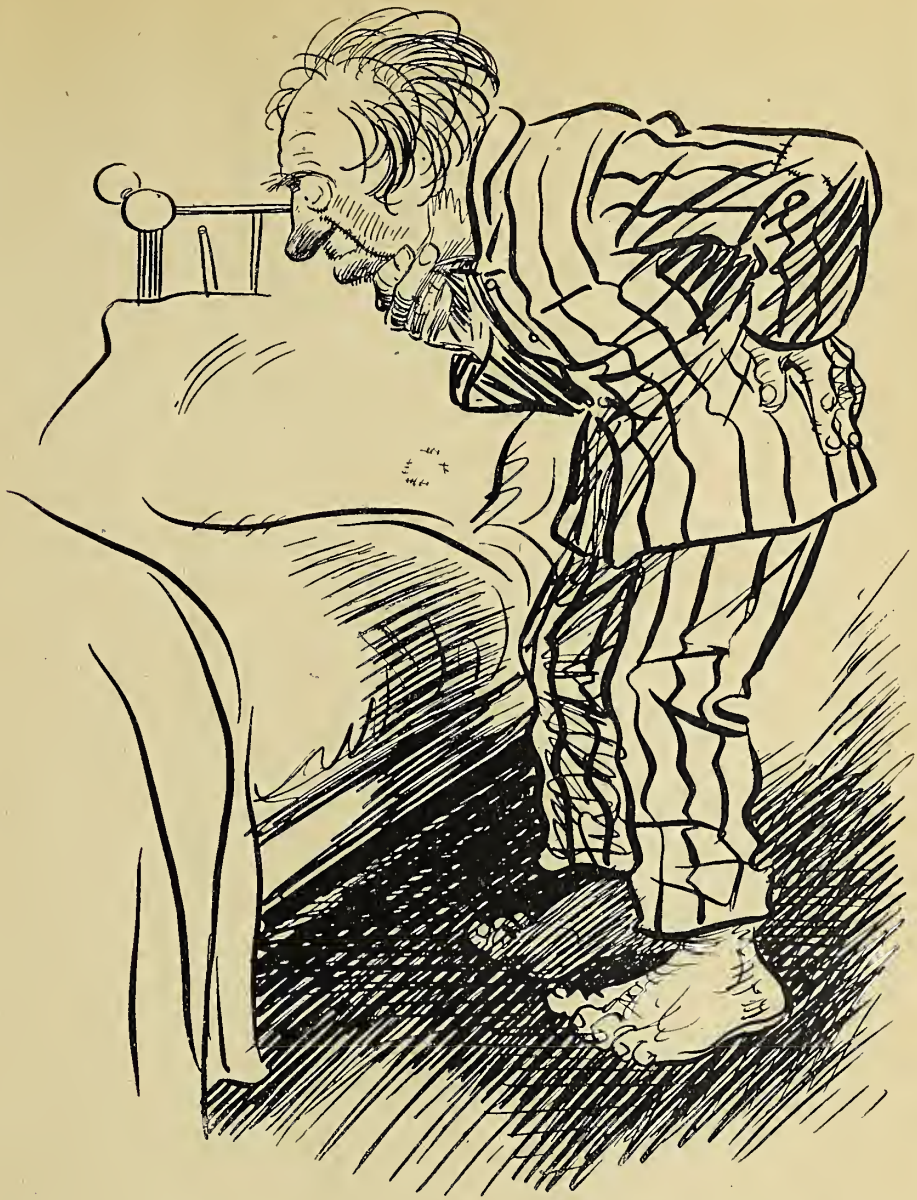
The Bloodstained Bodkin came to Bath, and when the scene was set

I took a room in Edward Street—the best that I could get.
I gave the woman eighteenpence, and one half-guinea stall—

Twelve shillings, laddie, for a bed! The charge was pretty tall.

The memory of that awful night will never from me part;
The mattress, laddie, nearly broke the Bloodstained Bodkin's heart.

Hast never pondered, laddie, on the joys of being dead?
Then go to Bath and sleep upon the Bodkin's concrete bed.



“The memory of that awful night will never from me part.”

"Austrian Fortress Falls"



HE made a curious noise with his mouth,
Like a rusty weather-cock veering south,
A Colonel cursing his luck at golf,
Or a baby giraffe with the whooping-cough.

He paused for a moment, as one in pain,
Before he returned to the charge again;
And if you have ridden a tyreless bike
You know what his next attempt was like.

He opened his mouth and he shut his eyes,
Like a kindly kangaroo catching flies—
Then sneezed! As a sneeze 'twas a fearful fizzle,
But he *was* the first man to pronounce
PRZEMYSL!



“Before he returned to the charge again.”

"The Navy Avoids Battle"

THEY say that Jack Jellicoe reads with
delight

The piffle pale Parliamentarians write.

They say he considers that it is a sin

To anger the Prussians by rubbing it in ;

He bids us be kind to each dear little Hun

That he may be sorry for what he has done.

His tender regard for the Prussian extends

To the Austrian, the Turk and the rest of his
friends ;

He loves them so much, he is leading the
Fleet



To blow 'em to blazes—by way
of a treat.

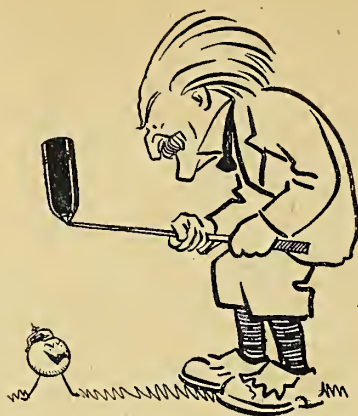
And when he has finally scup-
pered the lot

He won't care a damn if they're
angry or not !



“He loves them so much.”

"Lloyd George Shot as a Spy"



DEAR Winnie,—No doubt you'll be glad
to know

That the traitor was shot an hour ago.
They say that his castle at Walton Heath
Was crowded with Germans, armed to the teeth;
While his house at whatever the place is called
Had a wonderful wireless plant installed.
Indeed, from the evidence it appears
He had been in the Kaiser's pay for years.
Everyone knows he was out of town
The day that the *Hard Boiled Egg* went down;
While as for his ancestry—don't forget it,
"Lloyd George" is as German as you can get it.



"He had been in the Kaiser's pay for years."

“ The Turks were Bribed at Gallipoli ”



WHEN Hamilton saw that the game was up,
He said to me: “ Nobby ! we’re sold a pup.
We’ve stuck it for months, but it ain’t no use,
You hop along, son, with a flag of truce.

“ And tell them giddy old Turks from me,
That if they’ll let us put out to sea,
I swear that I’ll give ’em the Straits of Dover
The minute this rotten old war is over.”

The Turcos haggled, as Turcos do,
So I chucked in Egypt and Malta too ;
And one of their generals—a howling toff—
Came down in the evening to see us off !



“Came down in the evening to see us off!”

"The Big Push is Beginning"

MY Jim, he joined when it began,
And stuck it like a little man,
And they'll want Jim, without a doubt,
For this Big Push they talk about.

Schoolmaster said my Jim was slow,
When he joined up two year ago ;
But Jim has such a blessed cheek
They made him sentry, in a week !

So don't you sit about and fret
Because the war 'ent over yet.
This Big Push won't be long about
Now my boy Jim is ordered out !





“This Big Push won’t be long about
Now my boy Jim is ordered out !”

“ Super-Submarine Seen off Sussex ”



LAST September old Bill and me
Was trawling for shrimps off Winchelsea,

When, just as we finishes off our grog,
We runs slap into a Channel fog.

The *Mary Ellen* she runs aground ;
We lands on an island safe and sound.

We lives on that island for twenty years,
When, all of a sudden, it disappears,

And we finds that for twenty long years we've
been

Aboard a superior submarine.



"We lives on that island for twenty years."

“Wilhelm Did Not Wish the War”



LITTLE I need, my wants are few,
No simpler soul has been—
Merely a continent or two,
With islands in between !
Why grudge the mild and gentle Hun
The right to gambol in the sun ?

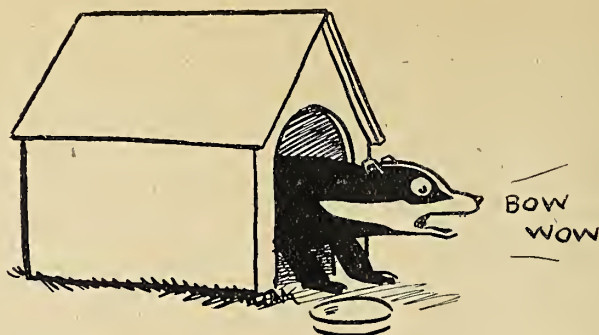
A shooting box to suit me could
Be found across the Tweed ;
A country house in Norfolk would
Be very nice indeed.
I like Balmoral, truth to tell,
And Sandringham would do as well.

The English should be pleased to get
A Kaiser for their King.
How insular to be upset
About so small a thing !
It seems absurd to have to fight
Because I want the Isle of Wight !



“The English should be pleased to get
A Kaiser for their King.”

“Super-Zeppelin Arrives in London”



UPON a golden afternoon, from out the
southern skies,

There came a super-Zeppelin of quite kolossal size.
It carried fourteen hundred bombs, and each one
weighed a ton,

And when it reached Trafalgar Square it covered
up the sun.

The darkness fell quite suddenly—in Kingsway owls
were seen ;

The nightingales were singing in the woods of
Walham Green ;

And badgers barked at Battersea—they thought the
day was done

Because a super-Zeppelin had covered up the sun.

Poor Allan Aynesworth dropped an *H* when
playing at the “New,”

And Shirley Kellogg nearly missed her ninety-
second cue ;

And there were cheers at Beaconsfield for Gilbert
Chesterton

Until they found it wasn't he who covered up the
sun.



“There came a super-Zeppelin of quite kolossal size.”

“The British Army is Contemptible”

WE'RE off in the morning, old lady,
We've finished with playing at drill ;
And now comes the chance to get over to France
And put the half-nelson on Bill.
Good-bye to the barracks and billets,
We're chucking up worry and “ biz,”
For the chance of some fun with the giddy old Hun:
What a jolly old world it is!

So keep up your pecker, old lady,
I'll polish Bill off on my own.



Just send me away with the thought
that to-day

Is the proudest you ever have known.
The war will be over and done with
By Easter, as likely as not.

*You're anxious to know if I'm sorry to
go?—*

What funny ideas you've got !



"I'll polish Bill off on my own."

"Swiss Submarines in the Channel"



THE Captain of the Submarine
Who sank the Dutchman *Margarine*,
And drowned a thousand men or so,
Was really Swiss, I'd have you know.

I often used to meet the man
When deep-sea angling at Lausanne,
When yachting round the coast of Berne,
Or shooting sea-gulls at Lucerne.

He always said the Swiss had got
The finest navy of the lot ;
And now he's proved his statement true,
We Germans merely ask that you
Give credit where the credit's due.

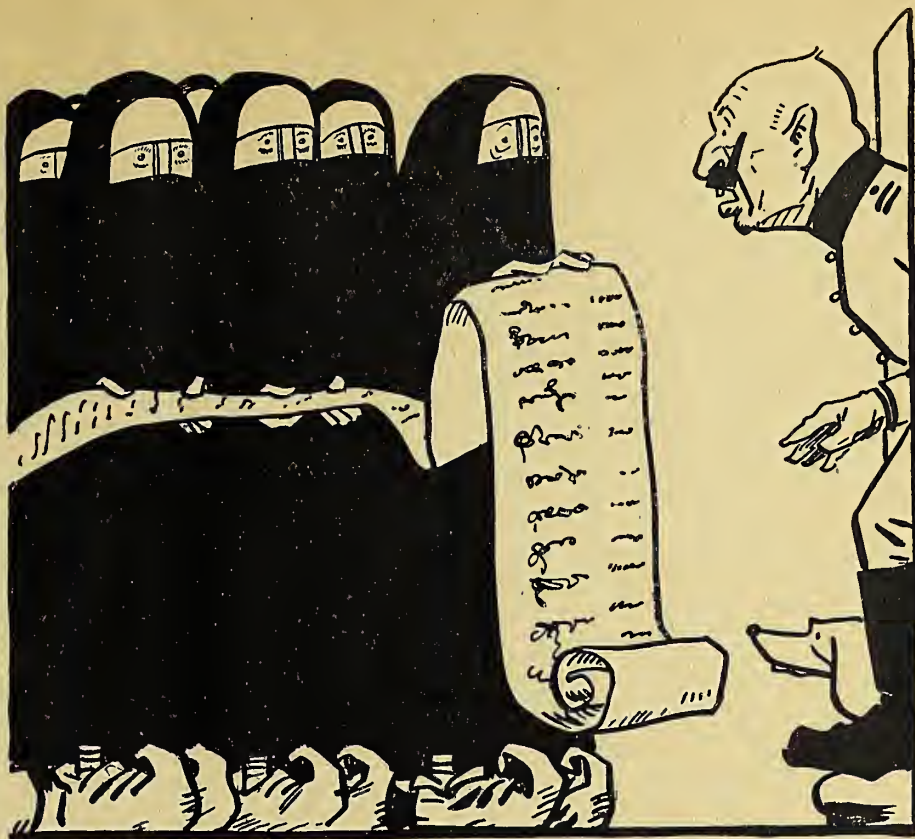


“When deep-sea angling at Lausanne.”

"Turkey Sues for Peace"

DEAR Sir, our husband, Johnny Turk,
Being unfit for further work,
Sends us, his favourite wives, to say
He leaves your service from to-day.
His wages being overdue,
He sends this small account to you.





“He sends this small account to you.”

"Albert Memorial Destroyed"



AS I had often done before,
I walked through Kensington—its Gore,

And, passing by the Albert Gate,
I paused to sing my hymn of hate,

Before that pile of cultured brick,
Which makes the Chelsea artists sick ;

That giddy, gilded wedding cake—
That—hold me down for goodness sake !

When, lo ! I found that dear old Fritz
Had blown the beastly thing to bits.



“Had blown the beastly thing to bits.”

"The Kaiser Arrested by a Special Constable"



WHEN I was doing duty down at
Portsmouth Hard,
I found him playing billiards with the spot-
stroke barred ;
I knew he was the Kaiser, for he looked so
hard,
So I asked him if he'd got his registration
card.

He said, "My friend, I'm working in a trade
that's starred"
(As though a tale like *that* would throw me
off my guard).
So I took the German Emperor to Scotland
Yard,
And now he's down at Dartmoor, doing
three months' "Hard."



"So I took the German Emperor to Scotland Yard."

"Polygamy is to be Compulsory"



WE are all going to be Solomons soon !
(Haven't we troubles enough ?)

Fancy marshalling my platoon—
Twenty at least—for the honeymoon
Every Saturday afternoon !

It will be difficult, you'll agree,
If Emily turns up rough !
Fancy Emily finding me
With a brand-new missus upon my knee—
Jolly old picnic *that* would be !



“ Fancy marshalling my platoon.”

"Suspicious Lights on the Scottish Coast"



ONE morning, in the Firth of Clyde,
A haddock sat him down and died ;
And, on the lonely Scottish shore,
He lay for quite a month or more.
The other haddocks, in a row,
Basked in his phosphorescent glow,
Until, one day, a Special came,—
I dare not tell that Special's name,
He was the selfsame Special who
Bagged Zeppelin L32.
He saw the light—he drew his wood —
His heart was right—his aim was good,
He dreamed of glory to be won,
And gave that haddock *such a one* !

And now upon the Scottish shore
Suspicious lights are seen no more.



“And gave that haddock *such a one!*”

"America Joins the Allies"

IN Nineteen Hundred and Twenty Five,
When there wasn't a German left alive,
The President ordered his serving men
To fetch him his —— Fountain Pen,
And scribbled a Note : " We join the fray,
For better or worse, as from to-day !"

No longer will Mommer raise her boy
To be a Little Lord Fauntleroy—
A dear little chap, too proud to scoot,
In a big white collar and velvet suit.
She will send her Phineas forth to fight
With a fountain pen which will really write.





“We join the fray,
For better or worse, as from to-day!”

"When the War will End"



A CTUAL evidence I have none,
But my aunt's charwoman's sister's son
Heard a policeman on his beat
Say to a housemaid in Downing Street,
That he had a brother who had a friend
Who knew when the war was going to end.



"Actual evidence I have none."

E N V O I

Drum and Fife

A CROSS the stricken fields of France
The tattered remnant rolled,
Bearing the bludgeonings of Chance—
Glorious as of old.

“Courage, comrades ! They come ! They come !”
Muttered the dauntless drum.

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The craven message flew.

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The foe is breaking through !
Our Army scatters for its life !”
Babbled a frightened fife.



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